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D. C. Man Didn't Know He Had It

A Rare Button Gwinnett Surprises Yale, Donor

Without knowing it, a Government employe from Bethesda gave his alma mater one of the rarest and most valuable of American historical autographs.

The gift—a document written and signed by Button Gwinnett, a signer of the Declaration of Independence—was announced yesterday by Yale University.

Its donor is Craig Colgate Jr., 43, of 3314 Hampden Ln., Bethesda, a Government analyst and member of Yale's class of 1935.

Colgate said yesterday the university gave him an opportunity to take back the document, but he decided it should remain Yale's property. It was included in a group of family papers Colgate gave to the university more than a year ago.

The document was not immediately discovered. After it was found, several months were required to determine its authenticity.

A Gwinnett letter brought \$51,000 in an auction in 1927, and a document to which his name was affixed brought \$22,500 in 1926. Colgate said these figures had not been equalled since, but he declined to disclose the appraised value of the new find.

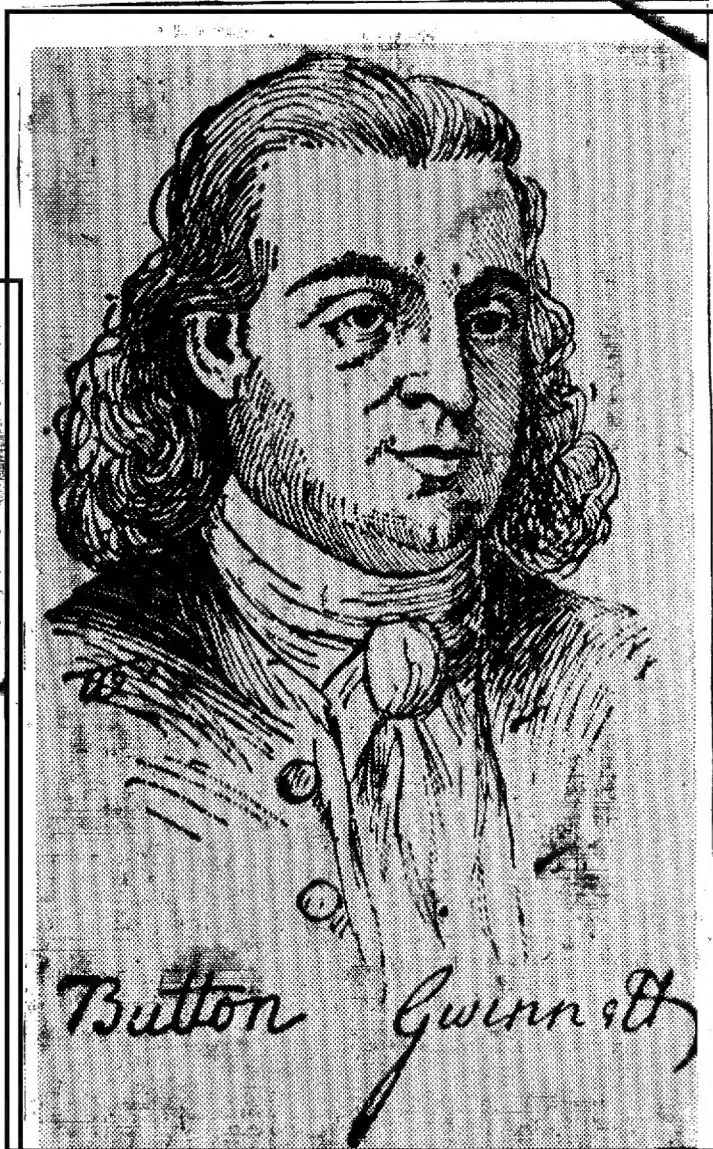
By contrast, no autograph of George Washington has brought more than \$9500.

Gwinnett's autograph is so valuable because he lived only

a short time after signing the Declaration at Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. The following May 19 he died in a duel in Georgia, the colony he represented in the Continental Congress.

The Yale document is a receipt which reads:

"Recd. october 12th 1762 of Mr. Benj Davies One hundred and seven pounds fourteen shillings & seven pence in Balance of all Accounts as witness my hand—New York. Button Gwinnett."



His rare signature has been given to Yale University.